

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6187

INFO AMCONGEN CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 0430

LONDON FOR SEITZ CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR RH GH ZA

SUBJ: PRESIDENT KAUNDA VISITS GHANA

SUMMARY: KAUNDA WAS WARMLY RECEIVED DURING A THREE DAY STATE VISIT TO GHANA BUT DID NOT SUCCEED IN GETTING GEN. ACHEAMPONG TO COME OUT IN FAVOR OF THE KNOMO/MUGABE PATRIOTIC FRONT. HOWEVER, ACHEAMPONG DID CONVEY GHANAIAAN SYMPATHY FOR DIFFICULT SITUATION FACED BY ZAMBIA AND OTHER FRONT LINE STATES. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER ATTENDING FESTAC OPENING IN LAGOS, PRESIDENT KAUNDA MADE A STATE VISIT TOGHANA FROM JAN 16-18,ACCOMPANIED BY R.C. KAMANGA (CHAIRMAN OF UNIP'S POLITICAL, CONSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE), H.C. MULEMBA (CHAIRMAN OF UNIP'S ECONOMIC AND FINANCE COMMITTEE), AND FOREIGN MINISTER SITEKE MWALE, KAUNDA MET PRIVATELY WITH GEN. ACHEAMPONG AFTERNOON OF JAN 16; VISITED NKRUMAH'S BIRTHPLACE, AKOSOMBO DAM, VOLTA ALUMINIUM COMPANY SMELTER AND MANKOADZE TUNA FISHING OPERATION THE NEXT DAY; AND LEFT FOR
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MONROVIA MORNING OF JAN 18 AFTER SIGNING JOINT COMMUNIQUE.

2. PRESIDENT RECEIVED RED-CARPET TREATMENT AND MADE BANNER HEADLINES BY PILGRIMAGE VIA HELICOPTER TO REMOTE VILLAGE OF NKROFUL, WHERE NKRUMAH BORN AND BURIED, AND BY PRESENTING COPPER LAMP TO NKRUMAH'S MOTHER, A GIFT ACCORDING TO KAUNDA "SYMBOLIC OF THE LIGHT OF FREEDOM WHICH THE MAN YOU PRODUCED

BROUGHT TO AFRICA."

3. JOINT COMMUNIQUE MADE FOLLOWING SUBSTANTIVE POINTS:

(A) GENEVA TALKS: KAUNDA AND ACHEAMPONG "RECOGNIZED THE URGENT NEED TO ACHIEVE UNITY AMONG THE NATIONALIST LEADERS AND TO AVOID OPEN DISPUTES WHICH ENCOURAGE THEIR COMMON ENEMY." THEY RECOGNIZED, TOO, "THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF AN INTENSIFIED ARMED STRUGGLE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL LIBERATION OF ZIMBABWE" AND CALLED ON OAU COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE "MAXIMUM MATERIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT" TO THE LIBERATION FORCES.

(C) NAMIBIA: HEADS OF STATE REAFFIRMED SUPPORT FOR SWAPO AS SOLE AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATIVE OF NAMIBIAN PEOPLE AND ENDORSED SWAPO POSITION THAT CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE SHOULD BE HELD UNDER UN AUSPICES BUT THAT SOUTH AFRICA COULD BE REPRESENTED AT CONFERENCE.

(C) SOUTH AFRICA: KAUNDA AND ACHEAMPONG REAFFIRMED SUPPORT FOR ANC AND PAC IN ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE AND APPEALED TO OAU COUNTRIES AND WORLD COMMUNITY TO INCREASE ASSISTANCE TO THOSE MOVEMENTS.

(D) BILATERAL MATTERS. BOTH MEN AGREED TO STRENGTHEN BILATERAL TRADE, ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION.

(E) INVITATION TO ACHEAMPONG: KAUNDA INVITED ACHEAMPONG TO VISIT ZAMBIA "IN THE NEAR FUTURE". ACHEAMPONG ACCEPTED INVITATION.

4. AT A PRE-DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE, KAUNDA AVERRED GHANA'S REVOLUTION IS MOVING ON RIGHT TRACK AND WARMLY PRAISED ACHEAMPONG'S LEADERSHIP. ASKED WHY FRONT LINE
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STATES HAD DECIDED TO SUPPORT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, KAUNDA SAID FAILURE OF MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE TO TALK WITH CADRES AND LIBERATION FORCES ON THE BATTLEFIELDS WAS ONE OF REASONS FOR DECISION.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH KAUNDA PRESUMABLY HOPED TO PERSUADE ACHEAMPONG TO COME OUT PUBLICLY IN FAVOR OF THE NKOMO/MUGABE PATRIOTIC FRONT, IT APPEARS THAT HE FAILED SINCE NEITHER COMMUNIQUE NOR PRESS STORIES DEPICT GHANA AS TAKING SIDES IN DISPUTE. ON THE PLUS SIDE, HOWEVER, KAUNDA WAS WELL RECEIVED AND GOT EXCELLENT CROWD RESPONSES WITH HIS SMILES AND HANDKERCHIEF-WAVING. (ACHEAMPONG, IN CONTRAST, IS THIS COUNTRY'S GREAT STONE FACE AND ELICITS NO ENTHUSIASM FROM THE MULTITUDE.) FOR HIS PART, ACHEAMPONG IS TRYING TO EDGE GHANA BACK INTO THE INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT, WHERE HE THINKS IT BELONGS, AND MAY HAVE TEMPORARILY DIVERTED POPULAR ATTENTION AWAY FROM DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. WE THINK IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY HE WILL VISIT ZAMBIA IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE: GHANA'S LEADERS HISTORICALLY HAVE BEEN DEPOSED WHILE THEY WERE

ON TRIPS OUT OF THE COUNTRY AND THE RECENT COUP ATTEMPT IN BENIN CAN ONLY FUEL ACHEAMPONG'S ANXIETIES ABOUT STAYING IN THE SADDLE. IN FIVE YEARS IN POWER HE HAS MADE ONLY ONE TRIP OUT OF GHANA (TO NEARBY LOME) AND HE WOULD BE COURTING DISASTER TO GET AS FAR AWAY AS LUSAKA.

6. IN ADDITION TO LARGE OFFICIAL RECEPTION JAN 16 FOR VISITING PRESIDENT ATTENDED BY ALL HEADS OF MISSION HERE, ACHEAMPONG GAVE A BANQUET EVENING JAN 17 TO WHICH ONLY AFRICAN COMS INVITED. SEVERAL OF LATTER HAVE TOLD US THAT KAUNDA DID NOT REPEAT NOT RESORT TO HARD SELL RE SUPPORT FOR PATRIOTIC FRONT BUT CONFINED HIMSELF LARGELY TO EXPLAINING EXTRAORDINARILY DIFFICULT SITUATION FACED BY ZAMBIA AND OTHER FRONT LINE STATES. THEY DESCRIBED KAUNDA'S PERFORMANCE AS ARTICULATE, EFFECTIVE AND EMOTIONAL (HE BROKE DOWN IN TEARS AND HAD TO INTERRUPT HIS COMMENTS IN MIDSTREAM FOR SEVERAL MINUTES). SAME SOURCES REPORT THAT ACHEAMPONG, IN HIS RESPONSE TO KAUNDA, STOPPED SHORT OF
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COMMITTING GHANA TO SUPPORT OF FRONT LINERS BUT DID CONVEY GHANAIAN SYMPATHY AND APPRECIATION FOR THEIR DIFFICULT POSITION.

7. RECURRING THEME WE HEAR FROM BOTH AFRICAN DIP COLLEAGUES AND SENIOR GOG OFFICIALS IS THAT THEY ARE SIMPLY "FED UP" WITH FEUDING AND BACKBITING BETWEEN VARIOUS CONTENDERS FOR ZIMBABWEAN LEADERSHIP. THEIR LACK OF UNITY HAS BEEN SHARPLY CRITICIZED IN GHANAIAN PRESS, AND WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT ACHEAMPONG PROBABLY REGRETS OPEN SUPPORT BY KAUNDA OF PATRIOTIC FRONT BUT WAS TOO POLITE TO SAY SO TO KAUNDA. NKOMO, ALTHOUGH INVITED TO THE JAN 16 RECEPTION FOR KAUNDA, HAD THE GOOD SENSE NOT TO ATTEND AND DEPARTED GHANA NEXT DAY.
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